DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 357 754 IR 054 562

AUTHOR Schryer, Lynn
TITLE Professional Periodicals Read by Elementary Teachers. A Scholarly Study.
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 59p.; Specialist in Education Thesis, Georgia State University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Undetermined (040) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Data Analysis; Elementary Education; *Elementary School Teachers; Literature Reviews; Media Specialists; *Periodicals; Questionnaires; *Reading Interests; Reading Materials; Research Methodology; *Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *Fulton County Public Schools GA; Teacher Surveys

ABSTRACT

This study determined which professional periodicals were being read by elementary school classroom teachers, which sections they read, and whether or not their media specialists were instrumental in providing and promoting the periodicals. One hundred sixty teachers were selected to complete a survey questionnaire; 128 completed the survey. Teachers were selected from 31 Georgia elementary schools located in the Fulton County system. Results show that "Mailbox" was read in some manner by 89 percent of the respondents, while "Instructor" was read by 71 percent. Emphasis in reading focused on teaching articles, with 63 percent of respondents indicating a high interest. Seasonal instructional materials were also of interest, with 61 percent of the respondents having a great interest. Additionally, the survey found that media specialists provided periodicals in media centers and teacher workrooms. Promotion was done at grade level meetings in 57 percent of respondents' answers and at faculty meetings in 45 percent. It appears that elementary school teachers read a minimal number of and a limited amount in professional periodicals, but those that are read focus on practical ideas and techniques. Appendixes contain the survey instrument and various letters as well as additional information provided by the respondents. (Contains 23 references.) (GLR)

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PROFESSIONAL PERIODICALS READ BY ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

by

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A SCHOLARLY STUDY

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
the Degree of Specialist in Education in Library
Media Technology in the Department
of Curriculum and Instruction
in the College of Education
Georgia State University

Atlanta, Georgia

1993

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Abstract

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Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine which professional periodicals were being read by elementary classroom teachers, which sections they read, and whether or not their media specialists were instrumental in providing and promoting the periodicals.

Methods and Procedures

The subjects were randomly selected from the 31 elementary schools in the Fulton County system. A questionnaire was designed and sent via the school mail system to all participants. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Studies (SPSS) computer program.

Results

Responses were received from 128 of the 160 teachers surveyed. Mailbox was read in some manner by 89% of the respondents while Instructor was read by 71% of those responding. Emphasis in reading focused on articles on teaching with 63% of respondents indicating high interest. Seasonal instructional materials were also of interest with 61% of respondents having a great interest. The survey found that media specialists provided periodicals in media centers and teacher workrooms. Promotion was done at grade level meetings in 57% of respondent answers and at faculty meetings in 45% of respondent answers.

Conclusions

Elementary classroom teachers appear to read a minimal number of and a limited amount in professional periodicals. The publications read the most are those that focused on practical ideas and techniques. Most media specialists are providing and promoting periodical use in the schools. Professional degree and/or years of experience made no significant difference in professional reading habits.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Overview

A successful teacher in the field must develop a discipline for remaining current with professional literature to maintain competence (Stubblefield, 1991). Professional reading is done in conjunction with taking university classes, staff development courses, or through self initiated action. Time for professional reading is not an easy task as teachers are asked to participate in an ever increasing number of duties and responsibilities within and outside the classroom teaching environment. Stubblefield suggested that reading is a form of professional development. Experienced teachers read to keep up with literature and to gain new ideas for practice. And since currency of material is important, one of the most effective and appropriate types of material is the periodical.

Womack & Chandler's (1992) survey found that teachers had little time for reading at school and that family commitments were a priority over reading at home. Kenney's study (1984) cited teachers as stating the greatest deterrent to periodical use was the time-consuming nature of examining

periodicals for relevant materials. Problems locating pertinent articles present an opportunity for media specialists to direct teachers to appropriate periodical sources.

While the need for lesson planning and time allocation might be reasons for avoiding professional reading, another consideration is the abundance of published material (Stopper, 1982). Teachers could be overwhelmed by reams of literature or stacks of periodicals and therefore not pursue a search. Stopper also found that teachers are discouraged by the technical language of some researchers and consequently do not read these journals. Periodicals that were read by participants in educational periodical studies were most often those of a practical nature (Cogan, 1975; Kersten & Drost, 1980; Mour, 1977).

Haycock (1985) stated that a major task of the media specialist is to work with classroom teachers to plan, develop, and implement units of study. Periodicals are an optimum tool for unit expansion and innovation. Since media specialists usually see incoming issues they can refer faculty members to specific information or articles to assist teachers. Surveys found that teachers were more motivated to read professional periodicals if there was promotion, discussion or review of

articles (Cogan, 1975; George & Ray, 1979; Kersten & Drost, 1980).

Information Power (1988) reported that a school library media center's collection should include professional materials and information services to help teachers keep abreast of trends, developments, techniques, research, and experimentation in general and specialized educational fields. The media center should subscribe to periodicals that fit the needs of the local school. Teachers will want what they know is topical and easily accessible. This is where the role of the library specialist is so critical - publicizing what materials and services are available.

It is this researcher's belief that most teachers do want to stay informed of new developments and theories in education. They also strive to challenge students and interest them with materials found outside textbooks. Both of these aspirations can be partially achieved through examination and reading of educationally focused periodicals. It is a matter of getting the desired material to the appropriate person at the right time.

Statement of the Problem

Today's classroom teachers must not only deal with the three R's, but administrative tasks, a deluge of paperwork, guidance concerns that were previously delegated to the family, committee meetings, and many other responsibilities including developments in the educational field. This latter need could be partially satisfied by reading professional periodicals.

The purpose of this study was to determine what professional periodicals are read by elementary teachers, why they are reading them, and whether their media specialist was instrumental in providing the journals.

The research questions were:

1. What professional periodicals are elementary school teachers reading?
2. What types of articles do teachers read in professional periodicals?
3. Does the media specialist promote the use and accessibility of relevant professional periodicals for teachers?

Significance of the Study

With the increasing demands on an elementary classroom teacher's time, teachers have little time for professional periodical reading. This study will attempt to determine what teachers read to keep abreast of educational developments. Do they look for materials to support the curriculum, or read for other purposes?

The local media specialist can be instrumental in getting materials into users' hands. In Fulton County, GA. each school subscribes to its own choice of periodicals, and purchases subscriptions to suit the teachers' needs. The school system also has a central professional library with additional periodical titles. This study will also examine teachers perception of the role of the media specialist in providing access to professional periodicals.

Assumptions and Delimitations

The researcher assumed that teachers had access to professional periodicals in their school media center or that they could obtain them from other locations such as the county operated professional library or personal subscriptions.

This study was delimited to elementary teachers in selected Fulton County Schools. An additional delimitation was that periodicals included were those of educational interest to elementary school teachers.

Definition of Terms

Professional periodicals are "those periodicals directly related to education, the scope of which may encompass a broad range of educational interests and activities; or the subject matter may contain primarily theoretical, philosophical research, or other significant ideas related to education" (Smith, 1981, p. 11).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading remains one of the most important ways that a teacher can continue to develop professionally. Cogan (1975) stated that "one of the most effective yet often overlooked means for continuing professional growth is a regular and conscientious program of professional reading" (p. 495). Professional materials have been defined as "those whose purpose is to prepare teachers to better carry out each step in the instructional design process" (Turner, 1985, p. 30). Taylor (cited in Turner) added that a professional collection represents all areas of instruction as well as being practical and innovative.

Professional periodicals are a topical resource usually found in elementary school professional collections. They provide access to current research and teaching techniques. Teachers use periodicals for a variety of purposes including reading about educational developments, learning about new products, and getting practical ideas and worksheets to use with students. District administrators, principals, and media specialists can encourage the use of professional periodicals through discussion, affording easy access, and providing time

for reading. The media specialist can utilize a variety of methods to promote periodicals housed in the school. The literature relevant to this study is explored in three areas: teacher use of professional periodicals, accessiblity and marketing of professional periodicals, and media specialist and teacher planning.

Teacher Use of Professional Periodicals

Because they are relatively inexpensive, periodicals are an effective means for teachers to keep up with educational developments. Readers are informed of innovations and trends in periodicals more rapidly than in books. Periodicals feature emerging issues; they notify the readers of conferences and professional activities; and they contain pragmatic materials for direct use in the classroom (Moore & Moore, 1990). Rapid advances in science, computer technology, and social studies necessitate using recent articles. Periodicals allow teachers to individualize instruction to meet students' interests and reading abilities as well as stimulate interest in current topics (Olson, Gee & Forester, 1989). Morrison , Porter, and Ronald (cited in Smith, 1981) concur that periodicals are probably the prime resource for stimulating better teaching, for gaining

knowledge of current research, and for sharing information of innovative techniques.

In spite of the fact that professional reading is a demanding intellectual activity, teachers are motivated to read by interest, curiosity, need, and pride in their work. Teachers also have an ethical obligation to their profession and to their students to keep up with current research and theories (Stubblefield, 1991).

However, research suggested that teachers do little professional reading (Cogan, 1975). In an Illinois study, teachers cited lack of time as the number one reason for not reading (Kersten & Drost, 1980). Womack and Chandler's (1992) survey found that teachers' "heavy teaching loads left little time for reading at school, even when materials and leadership were provided. A companion problem was the need for family time, which naturally takes precedence over professional reading" (p. 393-394). Teacher's time after school hours is limited not only by family but often by second jobs. Bell and Roach (cited in Womack & Chandler, 1992) found that of the 1546 Arkansas teachers they surveyed, 38% had second jobs, a factor which could undermine their professional reading. Thus the economic necessity of holding second jobs may limit teachers' reading time.

Several studies have been conducted on teachers' professional reading habits. Information was gathered on who reads, on their experience and degree level, on the focus of the periodicals read, and on types of articles found appealing. The results showed many similarities with only a few areas of disagreement. Ronald's survey (cited in Smith, 1981) of 104 elementary teachers revealed that 21% of his sample group read no professional periodicals during the preceding year. Cogan (1975), and Petersen and Balow (cited in Smith, 1981) all concluded that few teachers read professional periodicals on a regular basis. George and Ray's survey (1979) of 2,423 classroom teachers found that "55% of all respondents typically read professional journals 30 minutes or less each week" (p. 29). Those reporting no professional reading was about the same percentage (5%) as those reading 120 minutes each week (10%).

The teachers with 11 to 15 years of experience read more periodicals and a greater percentage of articles that any other groups. Those with 16 to 20 years of experience read the least (Kersten & Drost, 1980). The higher the college degree, the more time teachers allocated each week to reading professional periodicals (George & Ray, 1979; Kersten & Drost, 1980). Cogan (1975) found that teachers older than 30 read a greater

amount of professional periodical literature. He did not reveal if age was related to experience, to degree level, or to both. George & Ray's investigation found that teachers who held higher degrees had an increased awareness of reading material available in the school. They also determined that teachers with more years of experience perceived a greater availability of professional periodicals.

The teachers who read professional periodicals most frequently read publications of a pragmatic nature. They wanted fewer theoretical articles and more focus on simple suggestions and hands-on materials (Buchman, 1982; Cogan, 1975; Kersten & Drost, 1980; Mour, 1977). The majority of teachers in Smith's (1981) survey indicated that articles on practical ideas were the most useful feature of professional periodicals with the next most popular feature being "how-to" articles. Kersten and Drost's (1980) study also found that teachers wanted shorter, more concise articles; a digest of current trends, issues, and research; and pullout materials that could be used in the classroom. Keeney's (1984) investigation revealed that teachers frequently requested a guide directly related to curriculum needs that would outline strategies for using periodicals in the classroom. When teachers feel competent using periodicals in the curriculum, they will be

used more often and more effectively (Keeney).

Accessibility and Marketing of Professional Periodicals

Because of the volume of literature published annually, teachers establish reading priorities. Once a teacher has identified an interest, time for reading professional periodicals is incorporated into the work schedule. Teachers are generally not encouraged to read journals (Cogan, 1975; Criscuolo, 1982). Smith's (1981) survey found that over 70% of her respondents perceived little or no encouragement from their principals to read professional periodicals. Teachers stated that they would be more motivated to read if professional reading was promoted by the principal and if there were discussions or reviews of articles at faculty meetings (Cogan; George & Ray, 1979; Kersten & Drost, 1980; Smith). Suggestions to foster use of periodicals included posting reviews of current or specific articles on bulletin boards and presenting brief descriptions or reviews in a faculty newsletter (Cogan; Criscuolo; Smith).

Lincoln Unified School District (1984), in California utilized a quarterly survey to determine topics of professional interest. A group of central staff and volunteers scanned journals to identify material of value and then annotated

articles. Request for information was matched with the literature. Copies were then made (within copyright laws), and distributed to the requester by district mail. The annual evaluation of the project by the teachers was highly complimentary of the service. Selections were used for teacher in-service self education and for student assignment material.

Factors that affected teacher use of periodicals were involvement in program planning, in-service programs, administrative support, and the personality and qualifications of the media specialist (Haycock, 1985). The media specialist can also become a prime factor in promoting periodical reading. If teachers are to read periodicals, the material must be accessible. The media specialist can exert influence on the use of periodicals by locating them in a convenient spot. Because availability was cited as a reason for not reading professional periodicals (Kersten & Drost, 1980), journals placed in readily available locations could more likely be used. The convenience of having materials close at hand or of having materials delivered directly is an important consideration for many people.

"It is quite evident that the 'principle of least effort' as enunciated clearly by Zipf, governs the use made of libraries and other sources of information and is, in fact, a major

determinant of their use" (Lancaster, 1977, p. 319). Rosenberg's study (cited in Lancaster) found that perceived ease of use may be the major factor considered in selecting an information source. Accessibility is the single most important determinant of the overall extent to which information is used (Lancaster). Subscribing to useful periodicals will be a waste of time and budget if the material is not readily accessible to the user.

Besides physical accessibility Dervin (cited in Lancaster, 1977) identified accessibility levels, including psychological accessibility. An individual recognizes his need for information, is willing to use such information, and conveys the need to a second person (the media specialist), when necessary.

Woolls (1988) suggested that marketing the media center and periodicals involves the selling of services and the use of the collection. There must be enough periodicals, ideas for using them, and efficient circulation or distribution of articles. The media specialist anticipates teachers' needs, and communicates the necessary information at the appropriate time. If the articles or sources are provided at the right time, they can become "gifts" a teacher can't refuse (Woolls). To anticipate markets for periodical use, the media specialist communicates, asks questions, conducts surveys, is aware

of curriculum, and leave the media center to learn about interests and requirements.

In 1975 Loertscher and Land conducted a study that found that many full time media specialists provided notification to teachers concerning items of professional interest. Turner (1985) suggested methods to make periodicals easy to find and use:

1. Start a traveling professional collection that stops in the teacher lounge, workroom, or lunch area.

2. Establish an area for teachers in the media center. Provide beverages and maybe a selection of music to listen to with headphones.

3. Feature certain periodicals, teaching ideas or units, in a media center bulletin.

When looking for ways to get periodicals into the hands of teachers, no media specialist should promise to provide a service that is beyond the present staff, facility, or budget. A small pilot program could be implemented to see if it results in better service (Woolls, 1988).

Media Specialist and Teacher Training

Eisenberg and Berkowitz (1988) suggested that the expanded role of the media specialist includes consultation with teachers on resources for instruction and promotes use of the collection outside the media center. As such a consultant, the media specialist does more than simply provide materials, she also becomes involved with how materials are used, by whom, and for what purpose. To suggest periodicals for use, the media specialist must be aware of curriculum, teaching methods, and instructional design considerations (Eisenberg & Berkowitz).

When selecting professional periodicals to order, data is collected as to the needs of teachers. The media specialist uses resources to link teachers to the information and ideas they desire. Turner (1985) acknowledged that the media specialist knows the faculty so that materials selected would be used and useful. It is necessary to correlate the materials to the faculty's motivation and needs. When evaluating the use of professional periodicals, the media specialist determines what proportions of the teachers are served and with what frequency teachers use periodicals to meet classroom objectives (American Association of School Librarians, 1988).

Materials are suggested and selected not only by the media center staff, but also by library media clientele. Media specialists who select periodicals with no input from teachers may find that the choices don't appeal to the patrons (Woolls, 1988). Periodicals are more likely to be read if teachers have a voice as to which titles are placed in the media center (Womack & Chandler, 1992). A collection should fit the specific needs of a school. Cogan's (1975) survey identified a high correlation between teacher readership and school. ubscriptions, which suggest that when the desired periodicals are readily available teachers will be more likely to use them.

Eisenberg and Berkowitz (1988) presented some activities for media specialists to use in their role as curriculum consultants and resource providers. Of their suggestions, the following were suitable for periodical use:

1. Maintain professional educational resources.
2. Recommend sources for accomplishing unit and lesson objectives.
3. Guide teachers in selection of appropriate sources.
4. Prepare reviews or abstracts on current education articles.
5. Assist teachers in development of instructional materials (Eisenberg & Berkowitz).

Turner and Zsiray (1990) acknowledged that those media specialists with well-developed interpersonal skills, competence in instructional design, and the principal's support are more likely to work with their teachers. They also noted that little is known about the impact of the media specialist's instructional consultation on teacher behavior.

The very nature of a media specialist's role is that of initiator and change agent (Haycock, 1985). To fulfill this role media specialists encourage teachers to use periodicals and think of them as a key resource. The initiative to assist and plan with teachers comes from the media specialist. "It isn't a matter of time, it's a matter of priorities" (Haycock, p. 105).

Summary

The overall acceptance of periodicals as a significant resource for educators is evident by the increasing number of professional journals. Each level from pre-school through upper elementary has unique publications. Teachers in many districts have access to a variety of periodicals that range from scholarly to practical in scope. Although elementary teachers are coping day-to-day with children in classrooms, they are still searching for ways to help children succeed. The research

examined showed that periodicals are an effective, key source for stimulating better teaching. Despite the advantages of professional reading, studies revealed that the quality and quantity of teacher's reading is less than ideal (Cogan, 1975; George & Ray, 1979; Smith, 1981). "The rapidly changing society in which we live, the expansion in quantity and sophistication of printed materials, and the fact that reading is one of the chief factors in communication are all concepts which support the value of reading professional periodicals" (Smith, p. 32).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

This is a descriptive research study using a questionnaire survey methodology. The purpose of this study was to determine what professional periodicals and types of articles elementary school teachers read. The role of the media specialist in promoting periodical use was also addressed. The methodology and procedures used to gather and analyze the data were (a) the development of a survey instrument, (b) a stratified sampling of the population to be surveyed, and (c) an analysis of the data.

Population

The population in this study was all regular classroom teachers in the 31 elementary schools in the Fulton County, GA public school system. There are approximately 900 classroom teachers in grades K-5. A stratified sample was selected based on each school's total enrollment. Teachers in grades K-2 and 3-5 were grouped together and approximately equal numbers were selected in each group. Teachers at schools with larger enrollments were sent more surveys than teachers at smaller

schools. Surveys were sent to about equal numbers of primary (K-2) and intermediate (3-5) teachers representing 15% of the population. Subjects were selected using as the sampling frame the Fulton County Employee Directory.

Instrumentation

The survey questionnaire was designed to determine if elementary classroom teachers read professional periodicals, what titles were read, for what reason periodicals were read, and if media specialists were instrumental in promoting the use of professional periodicals.

On the survey instrument, question 5 related to research question 1 which deals with what periodicals teachers read. Question 4 related to research question 2 which asks what types of articles teachers read. Questions 1, 2, and 3 related to research question 3 which examines the role of the media specialist in marketing professional periodicals.

Classmates at Georgia State University assisted in the development of the survey instrument. Each question was discussed, evaluated, and altered to achieve an instrument that

would measure and answer the research questions. The revised questionnaire was field tested by six elementary teachers in Cobb County, GA, who were not in the sample group. The field test respondents were informed that the survey was to be used in a research study. They were asked in a letter (see Appendix B) to complete the questionnaire, to comment on any problems, and to indicate the amount of time it took to complete the survey.

Data Collection

In November 1992, a proposal was sent to the Fulton County Elementary Curriculum Department to obtain permission to survey elementary teachers in the system. Approval was granted on December 7, 1992 (see Appendix E). A survey packet was sent through district mail on January 5, 1993 to selected teachers at each elementary school. Each packet contained a cover letter (see Appendix C) describing the study, the survey instrument, and a self-addressed envelope for returning the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to return the survey within seven days. A note was sent after eight days to those who had not responded, reminding them to complete and return the survey (see Appendix D).

Respondents were assured of confidentiality and told that coding was for tabulation purposes only.

Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program available at Georgia State University. Descriptive statistical analyses were used to determine frequencies and percentages of responses.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine what professional periodicals elementary school teachers read, and what types of articles were of importance in their reading. The role of the media specialist in promoting periodical use was also investigated.

One hundred sixty questionnaires were sent via school mail to Fulton County elementary school teachers in grades K-5. One hundred sixteen surveys were returned. After a reminder was sent, an additional 12 surveys were returned bringing the total to 128 (80%) returned. All questionnaires returned were useable to calculate results.

Research Question 1

What professional periodicals are elementary school teachers reading? Survey question 5 releated to research question 1.

To determine which professional periodicals were read by elementary classroom teachers, professional titles were listed. The respondents were asked to check their level of use

for each title. Space was allotted at the end of the list for teachers to write in periodicals that were read but not on the list. These additional periodicals are provided in Appendix F.

Eighty one respondents (63.3%) indicated that they read Mailbox cover to cover (see Table 1). Twenty two teachers (17.2%) indicated they read specific sections of Mailbox. This periodical was read in some way by 114 of the 128 elementary teachers who responded. Creative Classroom was the second choice periodical that 91 (71.1%) respondents read in some way. The title read by the fewest teachers was Technology & Learning with 109 (85.2%) respondents never reading it.

Table 1

Professional Periodicals Read by Elementary Classroom Teachers

Periodicals N=128	Cover to Cover		Specific Section		Browse		Never	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Arithmetic Teacher	6	(4.7)	24	(18.8)	33	(25.8)	65	(50.8)
Creative Classroom	25	(19.5)	32	(25.0)	34	(26.6)	37	(28.9)
Education Digest	4	(3.1)	19	(14.8)	16	(12.5)	89	(69.5)
Elem Sch Journal	3	(2.3)	18	(14.1)	20	(15.6)	87	(68.0)
Good Apple	19	(14.8)	35	(27.3)	38	(29.7)	36	(28.1)
Instructor	31	(24.2)	41	(32.0)	39	(30.5)	17	(13.3)
Learning	22	(17.2)	31	(24.2)	29	(22.7)	46	(35.9)
Lollipops	8	(7.1)	15	(11.7)	19	(14.8)	85	(66.4)
Mailbox	81	(63.3)	22	(17.2)	11	(8.6)	14	(10.9)
Phi Delta Kappan	3	(2.3)	24	(18.8)	9	(7.0)	92	(71.9)
Reading Teacher	13	(10.2)	29	(22.7)	30	(23.4)	56	(43.8)
Schooldays	27	(21.1)	26	(20.3)	24	(18.8)	51	(39.8)
Science & Children	9	(7.0)	20	(15.6)	18	(14.1)	81	(63.3)
Teachers Helper	40	(31.3)	17	(13.3)	10	(7.8)	61	(47.7)
Teaching Pre K-8	7	(5.5)	19	(14.8)	20	(15.6)	82	(64.1)
Technology & Lrng	2	(1.6)	6	(4.7)	11	(8.6)	109	(85.2)
Other (See App F)	2	(1.6)	---		---		---	

Research Question 2

What types of articles do teachers read in professional periodicals? Survey question 4 related to research question 2.

To determine personal emphasis when reading professional periodicals, various topics addressed in periodicals were listed. Teachers were asked to rate their emphasis on a 1 to 3 scale. Space was allotted at the end of the list for respondents to write in and rate interests that were not on the list. These interests are provided in Appendix F.

Eighty respondents (62.5%) indicated their greatest emphasis in professional reading was articles on teaching and learning (see Table 2). This interest was closely followed by 78 respondents (60.9%) who placed high emphasis on seasonal materials. The emphasis of least interest was advertising for educational materials. Eighty six respondents (67.2%) showed low interest in this periodical feature.

Table 2

Emphasis when Reading Professional Periodicals

Interest N=128	Least		Medium		Greatest	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Activity worksheets	22	(17.2)	38	(29.7)	68	(53.1)
Pullout materials	25	(19.5)	47	(36.7)	56	(43.8)
Seasonal materials	11	(8.6)	39	(30.5)	78	(60.9)
Bulletin board ideas	25	(19.6)	46	(35.9)	57	(44.5)
Articles on teaching	8	(6.3)	40	(31.3)	80	(62.5)
Univ./staff devel assign	71	(55.5)	38	(29.7)	19	(14.8)
Educational research	41	(32.0)	57	(44.5)	30	(23.4)
Technology	58	(45.3)	56	(43.8)	14	(10.9)
Advertising for ed. mat.	86	(67.2)	36	(28.1)	6	(4.7)
Other (see Appendix F)	1	(.80)	--	---	8	(6.3)

Research Question 3

Does the media specialist promote the use and accessibility of relevant professional periodicals for teachers? Survey questions 1, 2, and 3 related to research question 3.

To determine if the media specialist was instrumental in teachers use of professional periodicals the repondents were asked to state where they acquired periodicals, and how the media specialist promoted the periodicals. One hundred nineteen respondents (93%) indicated that they used professional periodicals from their school media center (see Table 3). Eleven respondents (8.6%) cited other sources (see Appendix F).

Table 3

Periodical Sources

Source N=128	Frequency	Percent
School media center	119	93.0
Personal subscription	76	59.4
Fulton County prof. lib.	36	28.1
Other (see Appendix F)	11	8.6

One hundred twenty four respondents (96.9%) found professional periodicals readily available in their school media

center (see Table 4). Only 12 respondents (9.4%) found periodicals available in their faculty lounge.

Table 4

Availability of Periodicals

Location N=128	Frequency	Percent
School Media Center	124	96.9
Faculty Lounge	12	9.4
Teacher workroom	37	28.9

Seventy three respondents (57%) indicated their media specialist promoted professional periodicals at grade level meetings (see Table 5). Thirty three respondents (25.8%) stated that their media specialist did no promotion of periodicals.

Table 5

Media Specialist Promotion of Professional Periodicals

Promotion Techniques N=128	Frequency	Percent
Faculty meetings	57	44.5
Grade level meetings	73	57.0
Printed article abstracts	17	13.3
Photocopied articles	41	32.0
Table of contents distribution	13	10.2
Periodical routing	21	16.4
No promotion	33	25.8
Other (see Appendix F)	5	3.9

Demographics

Of the 128 respondents, the weight of experience was 11 or more years as a classroom teacher (see Table 6). Seventy one respondents (55.5%) only held a bachelor's degree (see Table 7).

Table 6

Experience as a Classroom Teacher

Years N=128	Frequency	Percent
1-5	15	11.7
6-10	26	20.3
11-15	33	25.8
16-20	22	17.2
21 or more	32	25.0

Table 7

Degree Level

Degree N=128	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor	71	55.5
Master	45	35.2
Specialist	12	9.4
Doctorate	--	---

Chi-Square Calculations

To evaluate the observed differences in the responses based on years of experience and degree level, continuity corrected Pearson chi-square value was calculated for survey questions 4 and 5 which related to periodicals read and areas of interest. This value revealed no statistical significance in years of experience with either question. The only degree level that had a significance in questions 4 and 5 was the use of seasonal materials by teachers who held bachelor's degrees. Of the 71 teachers with bachelor's degrees who responded, 71.8% put greater emphasis on the use of seasonal materials. The Pearson chi-square value was 7.99267.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Findings

This research study investigated the use of professional periodicals by elementary classroom teachers and how media specialists promote the use of such materials.

The publication read cover to cover by nearly two-thirds of the teachers was Mailbox, with an additional one-quarter of the teachers reading specific sections or browsing it. Instructor was read entirely by nearly one-quarter of the teachers, with an additional two-thirds reading specific sections or browsing it. Good Apple had the third highest readership with 15% reading it cover to cover, and over half of the teachers reading specific sections or browsing it. The fourth most read periodical was Creative Classroom with 20% reading cover to cover, and about one-half of the teachers reading specific sections or browsing it. Classroom teachers had the least interest in Technology & Learning with over 85% never reading this publication. The other periodicals with the lowest readership were Phi Delta Kappan, Education Digest, Elementary School Journal, Lollipops, and Science & Children.

Within professional periodicals, specific sections were read more frequently than others. Almost two-thirds of the

teachers surveyed read articles on teaching. Seasonal materials were also a popular interest with 61% of teachers seeking this information. Pullout materials and bulletin board ideas were of great interest to nearly one-half of the teachers. The least emphasis was on reading advertising for educational materials, articles on university or staff development assignments, and technology articles. Teachers holding bachelor's degrees were more interested in reading seasonal materials than were others.

The vast majority of teachers obtained professional periodicals in their school media center. Media specialists are making periodicals available in the media center of most schools. About one-fourth of the teachers found professional periodicals available in the teacher workroom. Teachers indicated that media specialists primarily promoted periodicals at grade level meetings and faculty meetings. However, one-fourth of the teachers stated that media specialists conducted no promotion of periodicals.

Discussion

Periodicals provide teachers with a great deal of

information, including current research and teaching techniques, information on new products, practical ideas, and worksheets for classroom use. However Cogan (1975), and Peterson and Balow (cited in Smith, 1981) all concluded that few teachers read professional periodicals on a regular basis. Consistent with those findings, this study found that more teachers browsed or never read professional periodicals than read specific sections or periodicals cover to cover.

Cogan (1975) stated that when teachers read professional periodicals, they sought journals that are pragmatic in nature. Smith (1981) also found that periodicals most frequently read were "trade magazines of the education field" (p. 149). Instructor accounted for a large amount of the total periodical use (Smith). This study found the greatest read periodicals were those focusing on practical matters in education.

Research indicated that teachers preferred fewer theoretical articles and more focus on simple suggestions, pullout, hands on materials, and "how-to" articles (Buchman, 1982;Cogan, 1975; Mour, 1977; Smith, 1981). Kersten & Drost's(1980) study found that teachers wanted concise articles on current trends, issues, and research. This study revealed simular interests by teachers. The number of teachers citing a

high interest in activity worksheets, pullout materials, seasonal concepts, and bulletin board ideas coincided with previous studies.

The higher the college degree, the more time teachers spent reading professional periodicals (George & Ray, 1979; Kersten & Drost, 1980). However, these two studies conflicted in their findings on experience level and professional periodical reading. George & Ray found that teachers with more years of experience read the most, while teachers with 16 to 20 years read the least. This study found no relationship between college degree or years of experience and the amount of reading done in professional periodicals. The only significance found in periodical use or interest level was that teachers holding bachelor's degrees had a higher degree of interest in seasonal materials.

Kersten & Drost (1980) found that periodicals placed in readily available locations would more likely be used. Rosenberg's study (cited in Lancaster) also concluded that ease of use was a factor in selecting professional reading materials. This study revealed that periodicals were easily accessible in media centers and in teacher workrooms, possibly precipitating use.

In addition to availability awareness of periodicals,

teacher's recognition of content is necessary for use. In Smith's (1981) study, the majority of respondents reported that professional readings were never discussed at faculty meetings. This study contradicted those findings. The media specialists promoted periodical use at faculty meetings and grade level meetings.

Based on the findings of this study, recommendations for further study are:

1. Is encouragement by the principal to read professional periodicals more persuasive than promotion by the media specialist?

2. If time were alloted for professional reading during the school day would use of periodicals and other materials increase?

3. Is there a correlation between teachers' personal reading habits and professional reading practices?

4. Does planning and consulting between media specialists and teachers have an effect on the use of professional periodicals?

Applications

Research has upheld the premise that reading

professional literature is a worthwhile activity for teachers. This study indicates teachers are aware of professional periodicals and read those which focus on practical teaching ideas. However given the number of periodical titles available at schools and in the system's professsional library, elementary classroom teachers are not doing much professional reading. If more time was available, reading encouragement given by media specialists or administrators, and ideas shared, teachers may read more than they presently do. A creative media specialist or system level coordinator could implement a variety of techniques to promote periodical use by teachers. "Reference to a particular article, involvement in decision-making at the curriculum study level, and the simple accessibility of professional periodicals are the avenues of the same end - that of promoting professional periodicals by teachers" (Smith, 1981, p. 152).

With budgets limited and subject to change, materials being ordered need to be those that teachers and students will use. Media specialists want to spend money on items that teachers find useful to or supportive of their professional needs. The role of the media specialist is not only to satisfy patron's needs but to create awareness, stimulate interest, motivate learning, and listen.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument

PROFESSIONAL PERIODICAL SURVEY QUESTIONNARE

1. What is the source for professional periodicals?
(Answer all that apply)

_____ your school media center
_____ your personal subscription
_____ Fulton County Paul West Professional Library
_____ other (please specify)

_____

2. Are professional periodicals readily available in
(Answer all that apply)

_____ media center
_____ faculty lounge
_____ teacher workroom
_____ other (please specify)

_____

3. In what ways does the media specialist promote professional periodicals: (Answer as many as apply)

_____ faculty meeting time
_____ grade level meetings
_____ printed discussions of articles
_____ photocopied articles of interest to you
_____ distribution of table of contents
_____ routing of periodicals to faculty
_____ media specialist does not promote
_____ other (please specify)

_____

4. Rate the following as they apply to your personal emphasis when reading professional periodicals (1 = lowest emphasis; 3 = highest emphasis)

activity worksheets	1	2	3
pullout materials	1	2	3
seasonal materials	1	2	3
bulletin board ideas	1	2	3
articles on teaching/learning	1	2	3
university/staff development assignment	1	2	3
educational research	1	2	3
technology	1	2	3
advertising for educational materials	1	2	3
other (please specify)	1	2	3

_____

5. Which of the following professional periodicals do you read?

	Cover to cover	Specific topics	Browse	Never read
Arithmetic Teacher	_____	_____	_____	_____
Creative Classroom	_____	_____	_____	_____
Education Digest	_____	_____	_____	_____
Elementary School Journal	_____	_____	_____	_____
Good Apple	_____	_____	_____	_____
Instructor	_____	_____	_____	_____
Learning	_____	_____	_____	_____
Lollipops	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mailbox	_____	_____	_____	_____
Phi Delta Kappan	_____	_____	_____	_____
Reading Teacher	_____	_____	_____	_____
Schooldays	_____	_____	_____	_____
Science & Children	_____	_____	_____	_____
Teachers Helper (formerly Worksheet)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Teaching Pre K-8	_____	_____	_____	_____
Technology & Learning	_____	_____	_____	_____
Others (please specify)				
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

6. Experience as a classroom teacher, including current year:

_____ 1-5 years
_____ 6-10 years
_____ 11-15 years
_____ 16-20 years
_____ 21 years or more

7. Degree Level

_____ Bachelor
_____ Master
_____ Specialist
_____ Doctorate

APPENDIX B

Field Test Letter

Lynn Schryer
130 Spalding Drive
Atlanta, GA 30328

November 18, 1992

Dear Classroom Teacher,

As a student at Georgia State in a sixth year program, I am conducting a study to determine the professional periodicals elementary school teachers read, for what reasons, and how the media specialist promotes the use and accessibility of the periodicals.

Enclosed is a questionnare that I am field testing to obtain information about the topic. Your assistance in completing this survey is invaluable. Please answer the questions and write comments on those that were vague. Specify any problems you encountered or any improvements you could suggest. Please indicate the amount of time that it took you to complete the survey and return the survey in the enclosed envelope to your media specialist.

Your assistance is appreciated. Your responses will remain confidential.

Sincerely,

LynnSchryer
Media Specialist

APPENDIX C

Participant Cover Letter

FULTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

SPALDING DRIVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
130 SPALDING DRIVE NE
ATLANTA GA 30328-1999

(404) 551-5880

January 5, 1993

Dear Classroom Teachers,

As a student at Georgia State in a sixth year program, I am conducting a study to determine the professional periodicals elementary classroom teachers read, for what reasons, and how the media specialist promotes the use and accessibility of the periodicals.

A sample of Fulton County elementary school teachers at each school was selected to participate. Your response to the survey represents the responses of many teachers like you and is necessary in order to obtain a representative sampling of information about the topic. Each questionnaire is coded for tabulation purposes only. Your responses will remain confidential.

The survey should take only 5-10 minutes to complete. Please return it through school mail within SEVEN days in the enclosed, self addressed envelope. Thank you for your cooperation. If you would like a copy of the results, please write your name and school on the survey.

Sincerely,

Lynn Schryer
Media Specialist

APPENDIX D

Follow-Up Note

FULTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

SPALDING DRIVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
130 SPALDING DRIVE NE
ATLANTA GA 30328-1999

(404) 551-5880

January 13, 1993

Dear Classroom Teacher,

On January 5, you were sent a survey questionnaire regarding your professional reading habits. Because your response is invaluable, please return it through school mail if you haven't done so.

If you have already returned the questionnaire, please accept my appreciation for taking time to respond.

Sincerely,

Lynn Schryer

Lynn Schryer
Media Specialist

APPENDIX E

Approval Letter

FULTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Elementary Curriculum Department

Inter-Office Communication

MEMORANDUM

TO: Lynn Schryer
Media Specialist - Spalding Drive Elementary School

FROM: Dottie Fielder DRF
Executive Director - Elementary Curriculum

DATE: December 7, 1992

RE: **Research Request**

With this memorandum, you have my approval to conduct a survey of teachers in the school district concerning their use of educational periodicals. I wish you success in your research endeavor.

If I can be of further assistance, please give me a call.

c: Diane Myers

1:55 PM
12/7/92

APPENDIX F

Additional Information Provided by Respondents

Additional Information Provided by Respondents

Question 1 - Sources for periodicals

West Georgia College (2)
Public library (3)
Atlanta Memorial Library
Fulton County Teacher Center (2)
College library
Emory University Library
Borrowed from friends

Question 3 - Media specialist promotion of periodicals

Meets and discusses personal needs and interests (2)
Individual teachers interest
We must seek out information
Printed update of new/useful materials

Question 4 - Areas of personal emphasis

Geography articles
Unit ideas
Special needs of & materials for special students
Ethnic materials
Parent/child feedback, relations (2)
Teachers sharing ideas
Thematic units
Ideas for classroom
How people solve problems
Workshops & training sessions

Question 5 - Periodicals read

TESOL Journal
Young Children (NAEYC publication)